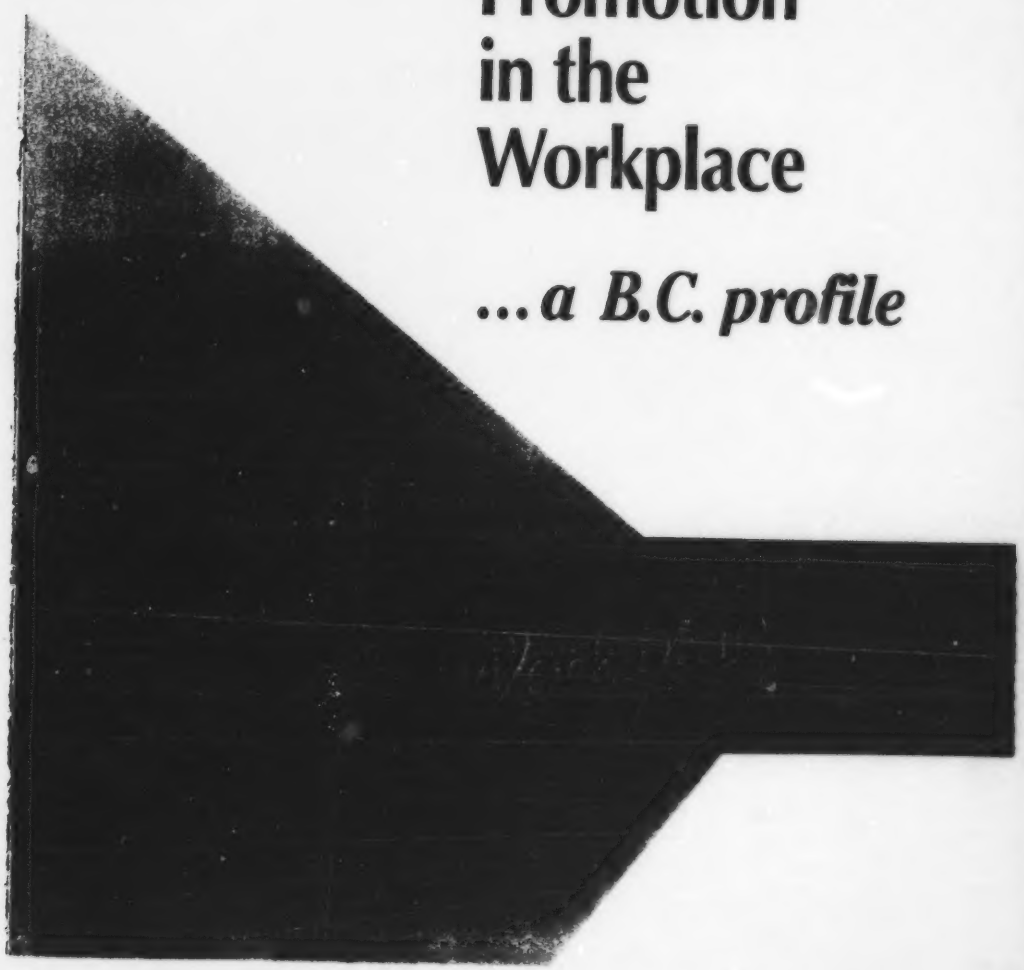
Health Promotion in the Workplace

...a B.C. profile



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Introduction

The Canadian workplace is rapidly being transformed. The "information age" has fundamentally altered both the character of many jobs and also how those jobs are done. Add in the range of social issues that have become prominent in the last decade—pay equity, the growing numbers of visible-minority and physically challenged workers, the proliferation of smaller-scale businesses—and you have a workplace that is radically different than the workplace of even 15 years ago. Such rapid change has presented management with a unique challenge: remaining competitive in increasingly tough markets while simultaneously responding to worker demand for less job-related stress and greater job satisfaction. Many of Canada's most innovative corporate planners believe that both of those goals can be achieved by implementing a healthy workplace initiative. The importance of these initiatives is even more apparent given that two-thirds of Canadians over age 15 are in the work force, where they spend approximately 60 percent of their waking hours. When surveyed, most of those employees agreed that the workplace is an appropriate and productive place to promote health.

In a corporate culture that is increasingly looking to the bottom line, there are planners who nonetheless regard even elaborate health and fitness programs as a smart investment. They see a real pay-off in terms of increased productivity allied with reduced medical and insurance costs and less frequent disability payments.

In British Columbia, there are many companies that have long had health programs as a central part of their business philosophy. Many other companies, intrigued by the success of these programs, are investigating or have recently instituted their own programs on a trial basis. The list of these B.C. companies includes large and

small businesses, crown corporations, hospitals, municipalities, provincial ministries, and school boards. Program participants include exempt and union staff, bus drivers, plant workers, janitors, maintenance workers, computer terminal operators, mayors, and deputy ministers.

There is substantial evidence that promoting health in the workplace is a smart business practice. You may have read media headlines reporting the benefits: "Employee fitness pays dividends" or "Fitness helps firm bottom line for companies". When you ask the corporate decision makers who have already made financial commitments for health promotion, they will tell you the results have been well worth it. Don Champion, Vice-President of Human Resources for B.C. Tel, has this to say about his company's award-winning employee health program: "It doesn't take much logic to know that a healthy person will do better work than an unhealthy one, who is going to cost you money in absenteeism, a lack of commitment, and in not thinking on your behalf. All of these things are major cost penalties. The edge is there for anyone who wants to take it."

The following material was compiled from personal interviews with corporate administrators, health promotion directors, occupational medical staff, union leaders, health and safety officers, and employee participants whose programs are yielding a variety of results. In all, 50 companies were examined. We have tried to present a sense of what is presently working—or not working—in those B.C. companies that have implemented a healthy workplace initiative. Many more companies, not profiled in this document, have already been motivated by the positive experience of others and have recently initiated their own programs.

This booklet is designed to help you deal with both the basic issues and many of the fine points that arise in planning, implementing, and evaluating a healthy workplace initiative. The areas that are covered include:

- The issues that spearheaded the initial investigation/funding for health promotion in the workplace;
- The key factors needed in a health promotion process;
- The sort of personnel/ administrative support and resources that are needed;
- How to motivate employees and management to participate;
- The barriers that inhibit success;
- The real bottom line issues;
- The results needed to justify continued dollars being put into the health promotion; and,
- How the initiative manifests a vision of the corporate culture.

As the relatively new concept of health promotion continues to evolve, a whole new way of thinking about work and ourselves is becoming popular. This booklet charts how this province is slowly being changed by new approaches to issues like employer-employee relationships, safety in the workplace and individual health practices.

“It doesn't take much logic to know that a healthy person will do better work than an unhealthy one, who is going to cost you money in absenteeism, a lack of commitment, and in not thinking on your behalf.”

Definition of Health Promotion

Health promotion can be defined as the process of enabling individuals and communities to increase control over—and thus improve—their health. In the workplace, this translates into a combination of educational, physical, recreational, social and environmental policies, activities and processes designed to promote and support the health of employees and their families. Health promotion complements existing resources.

Health promotion at the workplace builds on the definition of health as a "resource for everyday living." The World Health Organization describes health as: "The extent to which an individual or group is able, on one hand, to realize hopes and satisfy needs and, on the other hand, to change or cope with the environment." Translating this definition into practical terms for the workplace has been an ongoing process for those involved with the setting of goals and objectives for healthy workplace initiatives. Experience shows that effective initiatives cannot deal exclusively with physical factors. We now realize that health includes emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual elements—all of which can affect a person's life at work and elsewhere.

The Wide Range of Health Promotion Options

How an individual organization defines health promotion will ultimately influence the scope of programs and policies that are put in place. Different corporate philosophies on what health promotion is have resulted in:

- Programs that look at the workplace environment as it affects employees' health—both the physical environment and the organizational structure;
- Programs that provide opportunities for employees to grow, develop, and access social support;

- Creation of supportive environments for health, i.e. clean air policies, flexible work hours, etc.;
- Corporate policies that are in place to ensure continuous involvement by employees;
- Programs that address specific health practices, i.e. lifestyle risks such as smoking, drinking, poor eating habits, etc.;
- Programs offered to families and retirees;
- Programs offered to all employees;
- Programs that provide economic incentives to participants;
- Programs that are based upon financial contributions by the participants; and,
- Programs that offer space to employees to create their own self-sufficient fitness facility.

Current Trends in Workplace Health Promotion

Today, we find the following trends in B.C.:

- Healthy workplace initiatives are becoming increasingly comprehensive; what began as straight forward exercise regimens has evolved to include a broader concept on "wellness". For example, organizations are addressing factors in the home or work environment that affect employee health, such as air, noise and light conditions, the quality of machinery and equipment, the type of work, responsibilities at work, relations with supervisors and co-workers, and relations with family. Also, being addressed is the sense of influence employees feel they have over their health and work, how much social support they feel they receive from others, and the degree to which they actively participate in improving their own health.
- Despite national economic problems, healthy workplace initiatives continue to proliferate. Those companies that have reduced their health promotion activities as an austerity measure are a minority. Many companies have, during this same period, started or expanded their initiative;
- The province of B.C. has a large number of smaller businesses, and many of these companies are coming onstream as an eager new market for workplace initiatives;
- Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are often the first health component to be initiated. These counselling programs deal with both work-related and personal problems, and are particularly well equipped to offer quick support during a period of high stress (such as a death in the family);
- Even in the absence of comprehensive, long-term studies, there is increasing evidence of the cost efficiency of healthy workplace initiatives;

- There is an increased involvement of corporate medical departments in program planning and delivery;
- There is an increased interest in health programs designed specifically for older workers and retirees;
- While more large companies are building their own fitness facilities, others have opted instead to utilize existing community resources, sometimes in partnership with other small businesses;
- A few companies have begun to extend health programs to include the employee's family;
- A few companies have included rehabilitation programs so that ill or injured employees can make a prompt return to work; and,
- Although the interest is there, the majority of plans for daycare facilities still exist only on paper.

Reasons for Management Support

Although there are many reasons why the senior management of many B.C. companies have decided to implement and maintain a healthy workplace initiative, contributing to the "bottom line" remains a driving emphasis. Many corporate planners are aware of the positive correlation between a healthy work force and improved performance. They are looking for a convincing return on their investment and expect to see:

- Improved employee morale;
- Reduction in costs (i.e. reduced sick time, fewer injury claims, less absenteeism, etc.);
- Increased productivity;
- Decreased job turnover rates;
- The establishment of a stronger corporate image;
- Reduced incidence of back injury;
- The ability to attract and retain good employees; and,
- Improved labour relations.

The senior management of numerous firms are already convinced that they are getting a good return on their health investment.

Don Champion, Vice-President of Human Resources for B.C. Tel, whose employee health program has been around for over 15 years, states: "Employee health promotion results in longevity, lack of absenteeism, and an increased vitality in the workplace."

Chances are if you find an employee health initiative in place, you'll find a Chief Executive Officer or Vice-President who is making responsible decisions about his or her own personal lifestyle. Personal commitment and personal experience as to the benefits of healthy lifestyle practices are often enough to convince key management to support a healthy workplace initiative.

Art Whilms, CEO, Executive Vice-President of Westcoast Energy, understands the benefits of encouraging healthy employees. "I agree with it from a personal well-being position. A feeling of better-

ment—of worth—translates into personal betterment. You are more productive in your own home life, your social life, and business life."

A strong impetus towards a healthy workplace initiative can come from the employees themselves. Interested groups of employees initiate committees that come up with a convincing rationale for senior management to adopt pilot projects. Although such projects may initially have little or no fiscal help from management, once success becomes evident, senior management is often ready to provide ongoing support.

Ken Barton, acting chairman of AeroFit, an employee-operated and funded initiative at Canadian Airlines, secured space and a loan for their project. He stresses the importance of knowing your company's financial situation. "The company will likely be observing what happens, and when financial times in the industry are better, they may view it as appropriate to provide more support."

"Employee health promotion results in longevity, lack of absenteeism, and an increased vitality in the workplace."

Administrative Structure and Support

The success of a health promotion initiative often depends where the administrative body of the program is positioned in the organizational structure and its ongoing support from management.

Administration Options

The three common options for administering healthy workplace initiatives are: "under the wing" of a larger department, such as Human Resources or Personnel; as a non-profit employee society; or operating as a "stand alone" in the company.

Under the Departmental Wing

Most initiatives operate as a function of a department or division (i.e. they are one service of a larger department; usually Human Resources, Personnel, Employee Relations, or Medical Health Services). The primary requirement when selecting this option is that the staff of the respective department or division must be capable and authorized to fulfill the following administrative and program responsibilities:

- Ensure a high-profile, positive image to both union and management;
- Obtain commitment from senior management for financial resources;
- Ensure confidential recording of employee data;
- Provide expertise in health promotion;
- Ensure cooperative relationships among internal resource providers (e.g., EAP, Occupational Health & Safety, etc.);
- Involve employees in all phases;
- Provide support for monitoring and evaluating;

- Encourage leadership development within the healthy workplace committee.

Administration and promotion of activities to decentralized (field) locations is most often conducted by area coordinators and volunteer representatives. This network reports to a central coordinator in head office. The organizational structure can make communication cumbersome, especially when seeking program approval. However, a determined effort from those involved will maintain momentum.

Non-Profit Employee Society

Healthy workplace initiatives also commonly operate as self-sufficient entities, such as a foundation, social club or non-profit society (e.g., Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, Canadian Airlines, Cominco). As an employee-driven and self-sufficient initiative, the non-profit society thrives under the enthusiasm and commitment of an elected executive board. Monies may be secured from the company or management in the form of a loan which could be paid back with or without interest. A user pay structure is another common financing method for this option.

Chances are that management will be observing what happens with the initiative, and when financial times or philosophical commitment improves, they may take the initiative under their wing and offer to administer future development.

Standing on its Own

In some cases, the health promotion initiative has been repositioned in the organization to stand on its own. Such an initiative may begin as a function of a larger department, but as management becomes aware of the value of the initiative, and as administrative support is secured, the initiative may be given departmental status. With such recognition, the initiative has more autonomy and less difficulty in competing for resources.

Administrative Commitment

How well health promotion meshes with the organization's mission and goals is also important. Are there policies/practices set up to ensure support of employee involvement in the initiative? What is the evidence of support and interest by upper and middle management?

A memo to the departmental managers of the City of Vancouver from city manager Fritz Bowers encourages active support for their FitCity employee health initiative. He writes, "We, as managers, should encourage such activity, not discourage it. Where productivity and manning requirements permit it, I would encourage you to be flexible to requests made by your employees with respect to changing their lunch hour to be able to participate in a FitCity event, or even starting work early or late, in order to participate in a fitness program. Enthusiastic and healthier employees benefit us all."

Successful Beginnings

Some health promotion initiatives have come and gone, while others have come and grown. The initiatives that have survived the maturation process are now yielding a variety of results. Benefits experienced by the pioneers of the field can be used as objectives for those who are just beginning or are revamping.

Employers embarking on the development of an initiative will find that adherence to a few principles will enhance their return on investment. The focus is on a committed partnership between employer and employees.

Preparation: the Groundwork

Ensuring the development of a successful initiative requires the following groundwork:

First learn and explore the situation. Examine the environment, the issues, and the people involved to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the situation.

Second gain acceptance from each group, i.e. employees, unions, and all levels of management. Employee ownership and empowerment is necessary to acquire acceptance. Ownership will be taken if:

- Employees perceive a problem to be a problem;
- Employees are involved in all aspects of the planning;
- Employees are supported by management;
- Adequate funding and resources are available;
- Progress is made and recognized; and,
- Employees perceive themselves as the developer of the initiative.

Finally, employee needs must be ascertained. This would include determining employee's opinions related to health promotion, the resources that might be required to provide health promotion services, as well as their essential health needs.

Commitment and Credibility

According to employee planning groups, an initiative will have credibility and will succeed if it:

- Receives true commitment from all levels of management;
- Receives acceptance by the employees it is intended to serve;
- Is provided with continued resources;
- Is promoted on the basis of its value to the individual, not the organization;
- Directly involves employees in planning and implementation;
- Includes upper level management and union representation on program planning committees;
- Is perceived as being comprehensive and adequately funded;
- Provides a variety of program options;
- Provides an effective communication network to ensure that clear and timely information is received across work locations;
- Is an initiative that every employee group has access to; and,
- Maintains strict confidentiality of employee records.

If employees feel the initiative ignores long-standing environmental health concerns with air quality and poor lighting, uses unrealistic shift scheduling, and expresses an authoritarian management style, then it will be seen as a "token" initiative and will not gain acceptance.

"The elements of the fitness program are not as important as the commitment of the company to have healthy employees," insists Colin Kelly, former President of Independent Canadian Transit Union (ICTU) and a member of B.C. Transit's TransFit program. "If the company is interested in the well-being of employees, they will be interested in both the working conditions and extra-curricular activities."

Employee Involvement and Ownership

There is clear and strong evidence that health promotion will not work unless employees believe the initiative belongs to them. From the needs assessment to the design and implementation of programs and policies, the process must not be perceived to be dominated by management.

David Kelpin, Wellness Director for St. Paul's Hospital, emphasizes this by saying, "The initiative will fail if it is imposed on the employees." Kelpin is emphatic that the fitness program not project ideas such as, "This is good for you," "We are going to help or fix you," or "We'll make your life better."

"It has to come from the employees," agrees retired Vancouver General Hospital president James Flett. "If it is dominated by management, then it won't work. Senior management can best help by providing the encouragement, support, and opportunities for employees to participate."

> **"The elements of the fitness program are not as important as the commitment of the company to have healthy employees"**

Identify Needs and Priorities

You need to find out what the employees want and need. Be advised when handing out a "needs assessment," not to offer options you can't provide. A thorough

needs analysis, well promoted and easily available to all employees, will provide direction. It is essential for the employer to determine what his employees need to improve their health. Following are the key points that should be addressed:

- What are the employees' perceived health needs and interests?
- Are employees personally interested?
- Do employees perceive the employer as being supportive?
- Do working conditions affect their health (i.e. poor lighting, excessive job stress, lack of social support)?
- What are the barriers/opportunities within the workplace that affect their health?
- What are the employees' preferences for taking part in program activities (i.e. through community resources and/or in-house facilities)?
- What times are convenient for program participation?
- What characteristics of the employee population (e.g., ethnic origin, sex, age, education, etc.) may relate to health problems, risk factors and health behaviours?

It is also necessary to tie the objectives of your health promotion effort to the philosophy and bottom line objectives of your organization. These are some of the factors you will want to assess:

- The health problems of the employees and dependents that contribute to the use of medical services; and,
- The costs of medical care premiums, insurance premiums, and disability and illness benefits for the employees and their dependents.

Enthusiasm: Promote, Encourage, Educate

Most initiatives that have come in with a bang use that natural momentum to carry them forward. Others begin slowly, targeting a pilot group and, after gaining

acceptance from management, expand the initiative. In either case, promotion must be thorough and ongoing in order to reach all employees and management.

There will be many employees who sit on the fence and wait until they are ready to make personal changes in the status of their health. They need casual encouragement from the start to help them realize the initiative is non-threatening and is meant to help them reach realistic goals.

A conscientious effort to know names and faces by those involved in promoting the initiative will invite informal employee comments and suggestions.

Continual input from employees must be encouraged. Employee needs and preferences will change over time, and the initiative must change in tune with these (e.g., since many employees with young children won't want to take time away from home to attend program activities, you could offer family events instead).

> **"If it is dominated by management, then it won't work. Senior management can best help by providing the encouragement, support, and opportunities for employees to participate."**

Strategies

Never stop coming up with new ideas for involving employees in your initiative. Some companies have successfully used novel or humorous approaches; others rely on an unflagging information campaign about upcoming events. Listed below are a number of proven activities, beginning with "kick-off events" and concluding with ways to keep the momentum going.

Effective "Kick-Off" Events

Provide a strong foundation to your initiative by ensuring a solid "buy in." Successful introductions have involved a wide range of vibrant and fun activities, including:

- Publishing an employee news release or a special feature in the company newsletter, with a message from the head of the organization encouraging employee involvement;
- Holding a series of events combined with safety awards banquets;
- Organizing employee meetings on each floor or at each location to introduce the program and ask for employee input;
- Supporting guest speaker events held on company time or at lunch time;
- Conducting promotional tours to outlying locations;
- Holding stretch breaks where brochures or other information on the fitness program are handed out;
- Utilizing electronic communication bulletins;
- Conducting initial health reviews through Health Services;
- Taking a lively and active presentation to the employees;
- Holding an open house event with draw prizes, flyers, cutting of ribbon by president; and,
- Providing health appraisals to all employees, which can also provide an effective baseline measure for future evaluation of the program activities.

Maintaining Management Involvement

Management has to be made aware of the need for their support and involvement. Creative ways of encouraging senior management commitment to the initiative could include:

- Having the CEO send periodic memorandums to both middle management and division managers that encourage their support of the initiative;
- Holding meetings with executive committees at regular intervals to inform them of the plans, the progress and also to ask for their opinions and ideas;
- Approaching top executives personally to solicit their support and involvement;
- Providing ongoing presentations to new managers;
- Taking the time to inform and prepare middle management;
- Addressing the personal interests of management;
- Taking the opportunity to personally thank management when support is given; and,
- Asking each member of the Board of Directors what they feel could improve the initiative.

Maintaining Momentum

It is always a challenge to maintain the momentum. Ongoing innovation by those directing the program activities is needed to keep the energy—and participation levels—high. Try these ideas:

- Inter-departmental health challenges (e.g., TransFit's annual team Trim-Down Challenge, Vancouver municipality's annual week-long Fitfest, BCSC's "Corporate Olympics", a stair-climbing challenge, an invitational squash tourney, an all-round "sports day", or a "health fair");
- Mount award banners or plaques to acknowledge the participants of incentive programs;

- Create a status for volunteer positions by giving volunteers a uniform, free passes to exercise classes, etc.;
- Send promo letters home that will encourage family involvement for special events and general support for the programs at work;
- Organize social events for the non-fitness person (e.g., healthy pot-luck lunches, a fitness fashion show, fun nature walks, fishing derbies, etc.);
- Provide the participant with continuous feedback on their progress.
- Situate registration for events in high-profile areas such as the front lobby, cafeteria, outside of main stairways and elevators;
- Create bulletin board displays that can be rotated to all locations;
- Give health education modules through Health & Safety meetings and on annual visits to field locations;
- Send out "We miss you" cards to no-shows who skip exercise classes, and "Congratulations!" cards for quitting smoking and weight loss (Westcoast Energy);
- Provide personal program feedback and consultation;
- Have the managers present incentive certificates; and,
- Plan an annual Fit Festival, with points awarded on a team basis for such things as flossing teeth, recycling plastic bags, eating a healthy breakfast, etc. (B.C. TransFit Program, Victoria).

Program Nuts and Bolts

Components of Program Activities

The variety of programs, services, courses, and workshops offered under the umbrella of a health promotion program is endless. The activities you chose should reflect your objectives whether they are a larger change in corporate culture or providing recreational opportunities.

Programs have been used to address one or a number of avenues, ranging from first aid courses and Tai-chi to HIV/AIDS policies and drug abuse programs. Following are many such examples:

Workplace Socio-Cultural Environment

- Education/Employee Development
- Social Events
- Employee & Family Assistance
- Employment Equity Policies
- Employee Suggestion Programs
- Women's Programs
- Daycare and Eldercare Programs
- Pre- and Post-Retirement Planning
- Compassionate Posting Committees
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs
- Employee Input Programs

Workplace Physical Environment

- Back Care Programs
- Tobacco use reduction policies
- Health & Safety Programs
- Recycling Programs
- Ergonomic Evaluation
- Occupational Health
- Clean air policies

Risk Factor Identification and Intervention Programs:

- Nutrition & Weight Control
- Smoking Cessation

- Fun Walks/Runs
- First Aid and CPR
- Self-Defense Courses
- Corporate Challenges
- Fitness testing
- Fitness-to-music classes
- Jazz, Ballet, Yoga and Tai-chi
- Incentive Programs
- Health Fairs
- Newsletters
- Noon hour seminars (e.g., cancer, stress and time management)
- Health Risk Screening and follow-up
- Recreation facility membership subsidies

Financing

Most programming directed at changing corporate culture has minimal financial demands but requires stronger corporate commitment and more time. Recreational or other programs that require a facility will need creative financing options such as:

- Financial aid given in the form of an interest-free loan from the company. Keen initiators approach the company for an operating subsidy in the form of a loan until reaching self-sufficiency, at which time the loan is paid off;
- Membership fees (payroll deduction is an option), drop-in/seminar fees, cost for use of showers and lockers to joggers;
- The use of volunteers or co-op students to cut costs;
- Joint ventures with other tenants in the building or other companies in the area to share in the operating costs of a facility-based program;
- Organization of fund-raising events such as fun-runs, raffles, aerobic dance-a-thons, and so on;
- The packaging of programs to sell to other organizations (such as seminars and exercise leadership training courses);
- Grants from provincial government, local and national foundations, and local businesses; and,
- The renting of off-site facilities such as school gymnasiums or community recreation facilities rather than taking on the expenditure of building on-site.

Staffing

The size of the initiative will determine the number of staff and volunteers required to run it properly. Experience has shown that staff members often have a "make or break" role in the success of program activities. As Dr. John Sehmer, occupational physician and program initiator for Westcoast Energy's Energizer initiative program, says: "Make sure you find the right person to run the initiative, a good salesperson, a good communicator, and someone who deals well with management." The positions in a typical workplace health program are described below:

> **"Make sure you find the right person to run the initiative, a good salesperson, a good communicator, and someone who deals well with management."**

Contract Consultant

Most managers of health promotion initiatives are contracted consultants. As a result of changes in the health field, more companies are looking for people trained in business administration, promotion and marketing, and communication and counselling skills. Some companies may find it important to hire an outside consultant to distinguish it from being a management-controlled initiative.

Internal Staff

Some companies have elected to hire internal staff to coordinate and operate their initiative. Internal staffing will produce an initiative

that caters more closely to employee needs.

Volunteer Leaders

Employees are often trained as volunteer leaders for activity based programs such as exercise to music classes for their peers. Though not paid a salary, these volunteers often receive incentives: the program budget can pay them for tapes, outfits, workshop attendance, facility membership fees, and fitness leadership certification. Keeping volunteers enthusiastic is an art. "If you want reliable, responsible instructors, you have to nurture them and make it a privilege to be an instructor," says Laurie Shannon, the Fitness Coordinator at Workers' Compensation Board in Vancouver.

Co-op Students

Many programs have had great success by hiring a university or college co-op student. This cost-effective method buys you four months of new ideas and fresh enthusiasm!

Some Good Advice from the Field

Guaranteeing Success

Much can be learned from those companies who have already gone through the growing pains of implementing an initiative. By learning from their experiences and mistakes, you will greatly increase the prospects for your fledgling health initiative. Although circumstances can change drastically from company to company, two key qualities that are common to most successful implementations are: flexibility and commitment to change. Often, this can mean that certain management philosophies may need to be modified. The next few pages list many of the key areas that can cause pitfalls ... and include some good advice from those who have already been there.

> **"First find out whether or not health promotion fits with everything else in the corporate culture. If there are union/management problems, an employee health initiative will only be perceived as a bandage."**

The Workplace Environment

Make sure that your workplace environment is healthy. If there is poor air ventilation, bad lighting, or other problems that contradict the initiative's philosophy, then employees may consider it to be a token initiative.

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Make sure that your workplace environment is healthy. If there is poor air ventilation, bad lighting, or other problems that contradict the initiative's philosophy, then employees may consider it to be a token initiative.

Words of advice from Linda Crompton, VP Human Resources, Van City Savings: "First find out whether or not health promotion fits with everything else in the corporate culture. If there are union/management problems, an employee health initiative will only be perceived as a bandage. It would be a bit of an anomaly to bring along health promotion into such an environment. Buying 'cheap votes' is not the right approach."

Don't Set Your Goals and Objectives Too High

An overly ambitious plan of action can create expectations that are too high—ones that can never be fulfilled. Also, shorter-term goals that can be easily revised will more readily respond to employee feedback and other changes in the workplace.

Diversify the Planning Committee

The planning committee should include representation from all employee groups, including union, management, and department employee reps. Turf protection and territorial conquests create problems and misunderstandings that can often lead to a dismal lack of cooperation.

Words of advice from Jan Mitchell, Health Promotion Coordinator of Vancouver General Hospital: "In a complex, fragmented organizational structure, you need to look at how you operationalize an employee health plan. Bring groups together to work together cooperatively in the decision making and planning process. It is important to understand how to bring the relationships together."

Involve Senior Management

Poor senior management involvement—as in the initiative being "announced" by the CEO without prior notice to senior management—should be avoided at all costs. Senior management, unless brought on as allies from the beginning, may not jump on board but have to be pushed.

Words of advice from Joan McMillan, Manager of Employee Involvement, B.C. Hydro: "Don't try to start anything without management support. If they don't buy in, it will only hurt the initiative." Another piece of advice from the experienced: provide stronger support to middle management during the implementation.

Don't Be Seen as "Forcing" the Initiative on Employees

Employees can become suspicious of the purpose of a health initiative if they feel it is being pushed down their throats.

Words of advice: seek ideas from employees and incorporate them during the development, installation, and improvement of the initiative. This ensures that the best ideas are developed and also gives employees a sense of "ownership". Make sure there are effective communication channels, and make sure to involve employees in carrying the program to others in the organization. See that all employees are introduced to the initiative in such a way that a sense of community is developed.

> **"Bring groups together to work together cooperatively in the decision making and planning process."**

Avoid Unequal Access to the Program Activities

A variety of factors can create a feeling of unequal access to program activities. Some examples are: shift work, the diverse and often isolated branch locations of many companies, and the variety of interests and preferences across an employee group. Often these factors are more a challenge to program planning than an actual barrier.

Words of advice from Peter Quevillon of the Vancouver Municipality FitCity program "Become more of a resource program, less of a directed program. People are more and more educated and willing to make their own choices. We have to be able to provide resources for the requests of a diversified employee group."

Changes in Management

Changes in management may mean changes in company policy and philosophy. If a manager who is supportive of the initiative leaves, the incoming manager may not share his/her views and consider downsizing the initiative.

Words of advice from Jane Fernyhough, Richmond Municipality Program Director: "Don't get frustrated, there are ways around the blocks that may get thrown in your way. Do something else in a small way, don't lose sight of the larger vision, and come back the next year when attitudes may have changed."

Budget Limitations

Program budgets can become a problem during a time when participation and program success is higher than expected and more monies are needed.

Words of advice from Peter Quevillon, of Vancouver Municipality's FitCity program: "Get those with signing authority on the working committees and have good relations with Accounting and Purchasing departments."

Bottom Line Bonuses

How many corporate accountants are scouring records to measure success by noting reduced frequency and duration of sick time, fewer accidents, less severe accidents, reduced job turnover, reduced absenteeism, etc.? Not many! Very few initiatives have implemented evaluation methods to measure these outcomes. Some are sceptical of the methods used, while some are not prepared to commit the time and resources necessary to establish baseline and ongoing outcome measures. Others feel that the amount of money spent on employee health is a matter of judgment, where "success" is based on the number of participants. However, even without any such quantitative assessments, numerous B.C. workers—ranging from boardroom barons to widget makers on the assembly line—are solidly convinced that healthy employees make good business sense.

> **"It creates a sense of family, a sense of an egalitarian sort of society that we are trying to create. It's the best investment you can make."**

What Management Says:

- "It is not costly to do these programs. It is an economical process because we are finding the money in

areas where we used to spend it on something else. We are much better money managers."

– Joan McMillan,
Manager of Employee
Involvement, B.C. Hydro

- "It has that great levelling effect. When you all sweat and shower together, it doesn't matter what your status is when you come back to work. It creates a sense of family, a sense of an egalitarian sort of society that we are trying to create. It's the best investment you can make."

  – Charlie Lloyst, VP, Human Resources, Finning Tractor

- "You can't say the bottom line dollars are tied solely to health promotion, the fitness centre, or Health Services, but moreover they are linked to the whole culture of change. When we look at the scope of all the programs together and make people feel better about working here, the cost savings for the hospital are in excess of a million dollars per year."

  – Art Beadle, past VP,
  Employee Relations, VGH

- "There is no doubt our programs have contributed to increased productivity, reduced absenteeism and stress, and an over-all sense of employee well-being."

  – Bob Baber,
  Director, Human
  Resources, WCB

- "Healthy employees display improved performance, decreased absenteeism and generally project a more positive attitude in the workplace."

  – Bob Quart, CEO, VanCity

What the Employees Say:

- "The programs have provided that little extra motivation needed to get me into regular exercise, which in turn has led to general improvement in my sense of well-being, less frustration and tension, and more even-tempered."

- "I don't feel nearly as tired at the end of my shift now, and don't seem to need as much sleep as I used to."

- "I am feeling great and the job is going much better now with less stress, back pain and illness."

- "Helps my attitude towards work – I'm feeling healthier, happier and more tolerant at work."
- "Lately, I've noticed I don't get upset as easily as I used to at work. Even my co-workers have commented on the fact that I remain calm while they were upset about everything going wrong on the job. My wife even says I'm easier to get along with."
- "The programs have helped me a lot. I have lost weight, lowered my blood pressure, changed my self image and helped my performance on and off the job 100 percent."
- "It has built office morale around a common goal. It is a good feeling to have the support of that kind of program from 'the boss'."
- "I feel proud not to have to use my sick days."

"The programs have helped me a lot. I have lost weight, lowered my blood pressure, changed my self image and helped my performance on and off the job 100 percent."

Then There are the Documented Results:

- Results of a survey of the B.C. Tel Employee Fitness Program showed that, almost without exception, participants reported noticeable improvements in general health and a significant reduction in job stress. Morale, productivity and social issues were also thought to be significant, and 40 percent of the respondents noticed a decline in personal absenteeism.

- A one-year evaluation of B.C. Hydro's pilot project resulted in a five percent reduction in absenteeism, with an accompanying duration of absenteeism down by 10 percent. The accident frequency also showed a dramatic decrease during the time period associated with the Lifestyle Program. Over 50 percent of the employees had registered in the first six months of the Lifestyle Program. An equal number of family members had registered.
- Vancouver City Hall piloted a subjective evaluation, in the form of a survey to managers and employees, which showed improved morale and an increased level of work ethic in those actively involved in the FitCity program.
- A survey completed by 160 participants of the B.C. Transit Fitness & Lifestyle incentive program indicated the following benefits: 83 lost weight, nine quit smoking, 122 experienced increased feelings of energy, 99 felt less irritable/stressful, 67 had a decrease in illness, 52 experienced relief from back problems, six spoke of improved eating habits, and 134 increased their fitness level. Of the 160 respondents, 90 were regular exercisers before the program began, 70 were not. In addition, a quantitative survey was done to afford comparison between 98 employees who were assessed before and after participating in an incentive program that encouraged regular exercise. Marked improvement was noticed in cardiovascular endurance and weight loss.
- West Vancouver Municipality Exempt Staff Program involved an integrated health assessment, counselling sessions and regular follow-up. A reassessment one year later showed positive improvements in body composition, cardiovascular endurance, and flexibility. Most participants attributed their improvements to the motivation supplied by the program.
- The results of a Westcoast Energy Energizer survey showed that half of the 107 surveys returned noted improved changes in health since beginning the Energizer incentive program. Sixty-five were already regular exercisers, forty were not. Non-participants were surveyed as well.

Vision of a Company that Works Well

"The future is not someplace we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found but made..."

– John Scheer

Health promotion at the workplace enriches both the individual and the environment in which he or she works. Once health promotion has been initiated in the workplace, its growth and development will be fuelled by its own momentum. Already we have seen an extension of the first employee health initiatives, which were strictly fitness oriented, to initiatives that also address the social and physical workplace environment needs of the employee. Today, workplace health initiatives are being adapted to keep in tune with the forces of social and economic change that are affecting the way we value the quality of our lives. There are numerous changes in the way people view their working lives as they search for personal growth and self-advancement. Employees will look to employers for support in their efforts to balance working and non-working pursuits. Employers will be motivated to maintain and enhance a responsible workplace that, in addition to traditional benefit packages, offer program services such as self-improvement, back injury prevention, smoking cessation, fitness classes, stress reduction, daycare, flexible work schedule, and employee input.

Allan Best of Wilson Banwell Consulting supports this point with the following: "As Canada moves into a global economy, as we move more from a resource industry to an information and service industry based economy, as we start to get some demographic trends where there is going to be intense competition for well-qualified, well-trained employees ... there will be a lot of reasons why employers will realize that putting more of an investment into their human capital

is the smartest thing they can do."

Health promotion has made a substantial mark in the workplace and will continue to flourish, provided there are some updates in philosophy and perhaps adjustments in overall attitudes and mindset. Some of the challenges for the future include:

A Shift in Thinking

Although there is much evidence that building fitness facilities for employees and holding seminars on lifestyle topics does help employees gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop healthier lifestyles, a healthy workplace is not just about providing health program activities. The progressive employer will recognize that maintaining a healthy work force depends on valuing each individual as a person as well as an employee. This process can itself be likened to maintaining an exercise program: it requires daily commitment, long-term investment, and active involvement.

"You find that the important part of managing employee health is in acting like the local bartender, i.e. as a sounding board to everyone. This role is as important as offering any program activity, and is all part of the wellness package."

– Peter Quevillon, FitCity Program Manager

The emphasis of health promotion should be on people, as opposed to programs. And even though the financial and philosophical commitment to support employees in selecting healthy lifestyle choices often has to start from the top, it doesn't stop there. The employee has to take some responsibility for his or her own attitude as well.

Take the case of Bob, a B.C. Hydro employee of 25 years, who frankly admitted he had a terrible attitude. He didn't particularly care about his health, he was not productive, and he had forgotten about the work ethic he had learned from his father. He was a man who just put in his time. That is, until he bought into the philosophy of his CEO, Larry Bell, a man who shows commitment to the health of his employees through the Lifestyle

Program, an employee involvement initiative. He explains his commitment with this statement:

"We have a mutual and shared interest in the health of our employees in every sense. The challenges are greater, employees are working harder, and we have a greater need to provide a sense of belonging to a team."

Bob went on to organize his fellow workers in raising charity dollars for a B.C. Hydro event ... and he also rediscovered the sense of meaning in his work that had been lost for so long.

Where do Initiatives Expand from Here?

Some workplace health initiatives target only select groups such as executive, salaried, or office populations. Future expansion to the total employee population will see the industrial work force becoming more involved in designing program activities that meet their specific needs and work hours. We will evolve from centrally located (i.e. central office facilities) to program activities accessible to all employee groups in all locations.

Under the "health promotion" umbrella, initiatives that emphasize positive health behaviours will flourish. Initiatives will focus on the total person. Content will expand to address the concepts of self-esteem and self-responsibility. The expansion of health promotion will go beyond the work force to include retirees, spouses, and family members. To be effective, the initiative will become a more communication-based educational initiative and less of a directed initiative as people becomes more aware of and more willing to make their own choices.

Creation of Supportive Environments

In the future, the organization will become increasingly rigorous in determining the extent to which the physical work environment itself affects health and productivity.

The physical environment will be studied, and policies revised to address noise pollution, air quality, ergonomic design issues, etc. Issues around work schedule and job design will be managed by work teams in which the employees themselves take more responsibility in decision making, planning and evaluation. "Greater employee involvement in influencing and exercising control over their work and work environment will be a major factor shaping the organizations that will be successful and healthy in the future," says Vince Battistelli of the Merritt Group.

Developing a Sense of Community - Sharing a Mission

Healthy workplace initiatives will offer more options for participation in the future. Hospitals, universities, health clubs and health care agencies will combine their resources with business and industry. The business community will follow this example and share resources, personnel and programs with one another.

The healthy organization will have a long-term vision embraced by all employees and translated into action. Colin Kelly, former President of Independent Canadian Transit Union (ICTU), envisions a brighter future when he says, "There will be a corporate mission in which every employee will have a sense of participating, and in which every department will have an idea of where they fit in to achieve that goal."

A Lofty Vision

Overall, the vision of health promotion in the workplace is a bright one. We will have the opportunity to expand our perspective of what constitutes optimal health, both for the individual and the corporate environment, and we have the potential to influence the way our society in general views health. There is no more appropriate place to begin to improve ourselves than at the workplace, where people

gather for several hours a day in a community of peers.

Corporations are in the privileged position to help create an environment that can literally change the lives of their employees for the better. As a result, the cost efficiency and morale of each organization will improve. Productivity, absenteeism and medical costs will be just a few of the factors positively affected by the healthy workplace movement. B.C., through the collective efforts of many individuals and their respective organizations, is already demonstrating the reality that good health is good business.

“We have a mutual and shared interest in the health of our employees in every sense. The challenges are greater, employees are working harder, and we have a greater need to provide a sense of belonging to a team.”

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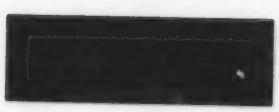

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Profiles of Healthy Workplace Initiatives

Air Traffic Controllers, Vancouver

START OF PROGRAM:

Air Traffic Control Occupational Health (ATCOH) began in September 1988 following a successful pilot project in Toronto head office.

TARGET POPULATION:

240 employees.

PROGRAM STAFF:

One health and lifestyle consultant, one psychologist (from EAP program), and one co-op student.

ADMINISTRATION:

Fitness committee representing unions and management, program overseen by program coordinator in Ottawa.

BUDGET:

Fund raising by committee, donation from union, start-up budget from company.

FACILITY:

One room equipped with weight training equipment, stationary bikes, rowing machine, rebounder, stair climber.

EVALUATION:

Keeps monthly statistics and presents year end report to management.

Albright & Wilson Americas

START OF PROGRAM:

January 1988 by employees and implemented with corporate blessing from head office in Toronto.

TARGET POPULATION:

50 employees; 35 are union plant workers.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Run by volunteers which change on a regular basis, occupational health nurse of staff.

ADMINISTRATION:

By volunteers.

BUDGET:

Paid by company, 75% of the cost of smoking and weight loss programs supported financially by company.

FACILITY:

None. Incentive program in place with off-site events organized.

EVALUATION:

Questionnaires distributed twice a year and results presented to management.

Arrow Transportation, Vancouver

START OF PROGRAM:

Pilot project in 1987 but ended in 1989 due to budget restraints.

TARGET POPULATION:

85 office employees.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Outside consultant who visited twice each month.

BUDGET:

Estimated to be about $16,000 to $18,000 per year.

FACILITY:

None. Incentive program was in place.

B.C. Hydro Lifestyle Program

START OF PROGRAM:

Planning table in May 1988, go-ahead given in January 1989 and the program kicked off in March 1989.

TARGET POPULATION:

All 4,900 employees, their families and retirees.

PROGRAM STAFF:

In-house staff.

ADMINISTRATION:

Organized through the Human Resources Group, Employee Involvement Department. One central Lifestyle Coordinator directs four regional coordinators who in turn supervise Lifestyle representatives who are nominated by the employees at each location.

BUDGET:

Estimated at $100 per employee.

FACILITY:

None, though in the plans. Incentive program presently in place.

EVALUATION:

Statistics are kept on lost time, accidents, and absenteeism.

B.C. Systems Software Control Program

START OF PROGRAM:

Opening of Fitness Centre in 1983.

TARGET POPULATION:

500 employees in building and 200 off-site.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Outside consultant, occupational health nurse visits monthly.

ADMINISTRATION:

Administrative Services handles the contract. Employee Fitness Committee (rotating membership).

BUDGET:

User pay system for classes and programs. Use of facility is free. Maintenance of facility covered by company.

[redacted]

FACILITY:

Fitness centre with bikes, weight training equipment, aerobic floor and showers.

EVALUATION:

Study completed found a significant correlation between fitness and absenteeism.

B.C. Government Employee Fitness Program

START OF PROGRAM:

In 1975 the B.C. Government Employee Fitness Program began as one of the first national employee fitness pilot projects in Canada.

TARGET POPULATION:

10,000 Victoria based B.C. Government employees.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Contract consultant, one half-time fitness programmer, eight part-time fitness instructors, and six regular volunteers.

ADMINISTRATION:

Contract through Workplace Health Branch, Office of Health Promotion, Ministry of Health and Ministry Responsible for Seniors.

BUDGET:

Operational costs paid by Ministry of Health and Ministry Responsible for Seniors. There is no charge to participants.

FACILITY:

There is an Employee Fitness Centre with stationary bikes, weight-training equipment, and exercise classes. There is also an on-site Ministry of Health and Ministry Responsible for Seniors Fitness Centre with stationary bikes and exercise classes. The B.C. Government Employee Fitness Program also utilizes three local community facilities for off-site fitness classes and activities. Central location and off-site fitness assessments are regularly performed.

EVALUATION:

Statistics of participation and adherence levels are collected.

B.C. Telephone Employee Fitness Program

START OF PROGRAM:

1977 with the first facility at Headquarters building. Satellite areas began informal programs in 1981.

TARGET POPULATION:

All 15,000 employees at all locations, 3,500 in Headquarters building in Burnaby.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Occupational Health Services department of physicians (2) and nurses (14), four EAP specialists, Fitness Program Manager, and a staff of Fitness Directors employed for each location who supervise trained fitness leaders (volunteer employees).

ADMINISTRATION:

Fitness program is administered by Fitness Advisory Committee and a central program manager.

BUDGET:

Facility funded by membership fees of $11 per month.

FACILITY:

Seven fitness facilities and three off-site rebate programs.

EVALUATION:

Comprehensive surveys and questionnaires have been carried out on a regular basis.

B.C. Transit Fitness & Lifestyle Program, TransFit

START OF PROGRAM:

September 1986.

TARGET POPULATION:

3,500 bus operators, maintenance workers, office staff and executive management in Lower Mainland and Victoria.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Outside consultant and a council of volunteer employees.

ADMINISTRATION:

Housed under the Corporate Service department. Overseen by joint union management Advisory Committee.

BUDGET:

Start-up funding of $100,000 jointly by union and management. Ensuing budgets from the Employee Benefit Trust Fund.

FACILITY:

None, though localized fitness rooms are presently planned. Programs were taken out to each of the bus depots.

EVALUATION:

Regular survey questionnaires following each of the programs were recorded and presented to management.

Canadian Airlines AeroFit Program

START OF PROGRAM:

Opened in January 1990.

TARGET POPULATION:

500 shift workers, looking for a 250 membership.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Outside consultant.

ADMINISTRATION:

Working group of five who act as directors.

BUDGET:

Began with an interest free loan from the company of $15,000 for purchase of equipment. Another loan was received as an operating subsidy. Membership fees include an initiation fee of $30 with $14 monthly fee to administer program budget.

FACILITY:

1,700 square foot facility: aerobics area, universal gym, and showers.

Cominco Metals COMGRAN Program

START OF PROGRAM:

1973.

TARGET POPULATION:

All tenants of the building.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Outside consultant to lead fitness classes.

ADMINISTRATION:

By social club volunteers, budget set through Personnel.

BUDGET:

Company pays the lease for the room. Membership fee of $20 per month pays for program operating budget.

FACILITY:

Exercise room with stationary bikes and exercise classes.

Davis & Company

START OF PROGRAM:

1985.

TARGET POPULATION:

275 to include lawyers and support staff.

BUDGET:

Up to a maximum of $140 for support staff; maximum of $450 for Associates.

FACILITY:

Offer membership subsidies to outside facility.

Finning Tractor

START OF PROGRAM:

1976.

TARGET POPULATION:

475 non-union office workers and 475 union mechanics.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Outside consultant.

ADMINISTRATION:

Employee committee.

BUDGET:

Original cost was to employees, as of 1982 costs of about $16,000 per year have been completely covered by company.

FACILITY:

Rental of an off-site gym for exercise classes and outside sports.

First City Trust Fitness First Program

START OF PROGRAM:

September 1989, although an employee committee had approached management in 1986 with no success.

TARGET POPULATION:

All employees across Canada; 350 employees in B.C.

PROGRAM STAFF:

In-house volunteers.

ADMINISTRATION:

Employee Committee of employees and management.

BUDGET:

Funded completely by company - incentive program and payroll deductions for YMCA membership.

EVALUATION:

Statistics of participation are recorded.

Greater Vancouver Regional District

START OF PROGRAM:

April 1990.

TARGET POPULATION:

700 inside and outside workers.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Outside consultant.

ADMINISTRATION:

Employee Lifestyle and Fitness Committee.

BUDGET:

Membership fee of $15 per month.

FACILITY:

1000 square foot facility to provide exercise classes and events; subsidy for outside workers.

Hiram Walker & Sons, Winfield

START OF PROGRAM:

1987.

TARGET POPULATION:

120 employees.

FACILITY:

Gymnasium space with Universal weights, bikes, table tennis, and outdoor tennis.

EVALUATION:

Participation not consistent.

Insurance Corporation of British Columbia

START OF PROGRAM:

1984.

TARGET POPULATION:

All employees although membership is restricted.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Outside consultant, trained volunteers.

ADMINISTRATION:

Executive Board is elected each year and meets monthly, monthly general meeting of members, operated as a non-profit society.

BUDGET:

Initial fees were $10-$12 bi-weekly to pay off costs. Present fees are $130 per year and handled by Executive Board.

FACILITY:

Fitness centre with exercise classes, weight equipment, bikes, etc.

St.Paul's Hospital Wellness Program

START OF PROGRAM:

June 1988 when announced by the president.

TARGET POPULATION:

2,500 medical, clerical and maintenance staff.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Wellness Director on part-time contract.

ADMINISTRATION:

Wellness Program Committee (20 from medical, administrative and support staff) under the direction of the vice-president of Corporate Development.

BUDGET:

Development grant of $100,000 from the provincial government.

FACILITY:

A series of five Prevention/ Promotion seminars was marketed to the corporate community.

Vancouver Municipality FitCity Program

START OF PROGRAM:

1986 with a one year pilot project.

TARGET POPULATION:

1,200 at City Hall and 6,000 employees in total.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Parks Board staff awarded tender, co-op student hired. They will be looking at developing a job description for an employee status position for fitness coordinator in the future.

ADMINISTRATION:

By Parks Board with budget under Occupational Health Department. An Executive Committee of six make the final decisions which go back to General Committee of 20 plus reps from each department.

BUDGET:

$12,000 for first eight months, $18,700 for second year, and $26,000 for the third year (1989). Now it is a recognized budget with no need for justification each year.

FACILITY:

On-site events at City Hall, incentive program in place.

EVALUATION:

Pilot project studied. Questionnaire circulated in 1988 and results circulated to employees and management.

Van City Savings Credit Union Fitness Incentive Program

START OF PROGRAM:

1981.

TARGET POPULATION:

850.

PROGRAM STAFF:

In-house as part of job description of Employee Relations.

ADMINISTRATION:

Two hours every two weeks spent on administering program.

FACILITY:

None. Incentive program in place.

EVALUATION:

Program statistics recorded.

Vancouver General Hospital Employee Centre and Health Promotion Program

START OF PROGRAM:

Called PULSE in Nurses Residence in 1985, Employee Centre opened in 1987.

TARGET POPULATION:

6,000 employees - families encouraged as well.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Outside consultants for positions of Employee Centre Manager and Fitness Coordinator, volunteer instructors.

ADMINISTRATION:

Employee Centre overseen by Health Promotion Coordinator from Employee Relations Department.

BUDGET:

$50,000 loan with $30,000 to be paid back, membership fees of $8 per month; operational costs paid 60% by hospital and 40% by employees.

FACILITY:

Fitness centre with weight training room, exercise class room, change rooms, etc.

EVALUATION:

Suggestion boxes, yearly evaluation of participants.

Westcoast Energy Energizer Program

START OF PROGRAM:

September 1987 by Occupational Health staff.

TARGET POPULATION:

Office, plant and administrative staff working in diversified locations throughout B.C.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Contracted consultant one day each week, Occupational Health Nurse.

ADMINISTRATION:

Employee Relations/Health Division oversees program, a network of employee volunteers organize program in their locations.

BUDGET:

$31,500 in first year, $34,000 in second year.

FACILITY:

None. Incentive program in place plus field trips by program staff.

EVALUATION:

Participant and non-participant surveys regularly distributed, program statistics recorded.

West Vancouver Municipality Exempt Staff Assessment

START OF PROGRAM:

1988.

TARGET POPULATION:

Exempt staff.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Outside consultant.

ADMINISTRATION:

Personnel Department oversees contract.

[redacted]

BUDGET:

$11,000 for first year; $17,000 for second year.

FACILITY:

Health assessments done off-site, follow-up done on-site.

EVALUATION:

Program assessment performed each year and presented to management.

Worker's Compensation Board

START OF PROGRAM:

1984 with fitness classes expansion in 1987.

TARGET POPULATION:

1,500 employees.

PROGRAM STAFF:

Moved from employee instructors to contracted Fitness Coordinator part-time who organizes volunteer employee instructors.

ADMINISTRATION:

Under the Human Resources department.

BUDGET:

Under $35,000 funded by company.

FACILITY:

Use of existing gyms and equipment.

EVALUATION:

Performance records are done yearly.

“As Canada moves into a global economy, as we move more from a resource industry to an information and service industry based economy, as we start to get some demographic trends where there is going to be intense competition for well-qualified, well-trained employees ... there will be a lot of reasons why employers will realize that putting more of an investment into their human capital is the smartest thing they can do.”

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This document was
written to acknowledge the
many players who share a vision
of compassionate working cultures.
To the employers wanting to make a
difference, wanting to contribute to the well-
being of their employees; to the employees who
give their programs growth and momentum; and
to the program managers or helping professionals who
strive to bring more depth, breadth and inspiration
to their work and those they work with.

A Dedication from the author,
Nansi Cunningham,
Health Promotion Consultant